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Sébastien Dalgarrondo, Tristan Fournier

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Conclusion: The wild in gastronomy and beyond¹²

Sébastien Dalgalarroondo & Tristan Fournier (CNRS – Iris, Paris)

On a rewilding laboratory

“Would you like some more live ants with your yogurt?” We are in a restaurant, but not in Southeast Asia or Amazonia where eating insects is common. We are in Denmark, in Copenhagen, and this is a phrase that those who have been lucky enough to eat at the highly prestigious Noma restaurant may have heard. René Redzepi, this restaurant’s atypical chef, offers the perfect incarnation of the renewal of the wild in global gastronomy. By including yogurt flavored with live ants on one of his menus, this unusual chef invites us to discover the taste potential of this local ant species collected by hand and delicately scattered on a homemade yogurt. The insects, judiciously trapped in this creamy dish, are just waiting to be chewed to release their formic acid, allowing diners who have become their predators for the day to enjoy a delicious lemony flavor. Food critics, struggling in the face of so many innovations and deviations, have difficulty describing his approach. American food writer David Rosengarten has suggested calling this cuisine “primitivist modern.” This oxymoron captures the disruptive quality of this chef, who is often presented as one of the most influential in the world.³

The culinary experience at Noma goes far beyond the gastronomic art: the aim is to offer diners a real anthropological experience, which requires them to overcome their disgust, question their culinary preconceptions, and reposition themselves in the long and complex history of the human diet. The recipes using ants on the Nordic Food Lab’s⁴ online blog perfectly exemplify this will for a radical revival of our appetencies:

On a whittled liquorice root we brushed honey infused with juniper wood and studded it with the frozen ants, freeze-dried fruits, seeds, toasted crushed grains, small aromatic leaves and flowers. This “chimp stick,” as it came to be known, was served on a charred piece of juniper wood [. . .] and guests were able to choose whether to suck all the edible parts off the stick, mixing the sweet, sour, aromatic, bitter and toasted notes or to pick at it and taste the flavours individually. Our hope was to evoke the mess of flavours and textures that would surround the ants in their field or forest habitat, and to use the sour taste to brighten the palate for the ensuing menu.⁵

The use of this “chimp stick” is not insignificant. Eating by sucking on the stick allows the diner to reconnect with their own animality by inviting them to temporarily abandon their anthropocentric position as a superior outsider: “inspired by ant and termite ‘fishing’ tools used by chimpanzees. Eating insects like these is part of our evolutionary heritage.”⁶

¹ Post-print version of: Dalgalarroondo S & Fournier T, “Conclusion: The wild in gastronomy and beyond”, in Fournier T & Dalgalarroondo S (Eds), 2022, *Rewilding Food and the Self. Critical Conversations from Europe*, Routledge, Routledge Studies in Food, Society and the Environment, pp. 167-178.

² Translated by Cadenza Academic Translations

³ In 2021, Noma was awarded its third star in the Michelin Guide. For the fifth time, it was named “World’s Best Restaurant” by The World’s 50 Best Restaurants.

⁴ A culinary think tank arising from the collaboration between gastronomic entrepreneur Claus Meyer and Noma’s head chef René Redzepi.

⁵ “Ants and a Chimp Stick,” Nordic Food Lab, June 2, 2013, accessed March 16, 2022, <http://nordicfoodlab.org/blog/2013/6/ants-and-a-chimp-stick/>.

⁶ “Ants and a Chimp Stick,” Nordic Food Lab, June 2, 2013, accessed March 16, 2022, <http://nordicfoodlab.org/blog/2013/6/ants-and-a-chimp-stick/>.

As conscientious sociologists and curious eaters, we obviously would have liked this conclusion to include an ethno-aesthetic analysis of this restaurant, its menu, and the measures devised by this unconventional chef to encourage the “average eater” to make this primitivist leap. However, to get a table at such a renowned restaurant, you have to book well in advance, which is not always the easiest thing to manage when carrying out field research, especially with the added complication of Covid-19 restrictions!

To carry out our exploratory investigation in this Danish laboratory, we chose to take another route, far from the gastronomic market and its select clientele. We chose to look at the MAD Foundation (whose name means “food” in Danish), also created by Redzepi himself, which is like a highly original tool for democratizing his approach. At the core of this ambition for democratization is a phone app called VILD MAD (“wild food” in English), which allows its users to discover good sites for collecting wild food: plants, berries, mushrooms, crustaceans, etc. We can see that the primitivist approach is closely entwined here with digital modernity. However, as stated by our interlocutor, the one who is in charge of developing this app and whom we interviewed in Copenhagen (who is himself a very experienced forager), this is not about survivalism. The aim is not to make everyone capable of living totally autonomously in the woods, but rather to help laypeople rediscover their immediate environment and learn to forage. It is to give everyone the opportunity to reconsider their everyday diet by reconnecting with the wild and its discreet abundance: “Denmark is not a land of gastronomy like France. We don’t have a highly developed culinary culture, but that doesn’t mean we have no assets. Take our apples, for example. They need longer to ripen, they are slower-growing, and these specific climate conditions give our apples a very distinctive taste. The challenge is to change how we look at our products.” One very interesting detail emphasized by our passionate interlocutor is that the application never tells users exactly where to find a particular plant or wild berry, since the aim is to encourage novice foragers to wander, to explore their natural environment by themselves, and thereby to create their own culinary topography. This is the opposite of the supermarket model. The aim of such an app is not to generate wild food consumers 2.0, but to use digital technology and its appeal (particularly to younger generations) to help laypeople take ownership of their immediate environment and explore it according to their tastes, the seasons, their preferred routes, and their family culinary history. Redzepi is perfectly aware of the limitations of a nostalgic discourse on children: “The old-fashioned charms of the outdoors are competing with the newfangled baubles of tech. Kids are so comfortable with devices that the ability to marry it with analog tech—your two feet—and propel you out the door and into the wild is a nice conflation of old and new.”⁷ The objective is to allow these children and their parents, by capillary action, to reconnect with the primitive pleasure of seeking food, of foraging in nature, like a hunter-gatherer who, day after day, constructs their own mental map of their territory and identifies the resources available according to the seasons, the plants that are present, and the weather conditions.

As well as offering many training courses to chefs from around the world, the MAD Foundation has developed a highly original program to introduce schoolchildren to wild cuisine. This is how R. Redzepi presents it:

The basic premise is simple: everyone in the world should grow up as a forager [. . .] Knowing your ABCs in nature, the flora and fauna, the patterns of the landscape and the rhythm of the seasons is as important as learning how to read and write. How might the world look different, if we all were foragers? We hope that our program can be an inspiration for others to do the

⁷ Redzepi, quoted in: Jason Tesauro, “One of the World’s Most Famous Chefs Wants to Help You Forage for Your Food,” *Washington Post*, June 29, 2017, accessed March 16, 2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/food/one-of-the-worlds-most-famous-chefs-wants-to-help-you-forage-for-your-food/2017/06/29/b59a1d34-5ceb-11e7-9fc6-c7ef4bc58d13_story.html.

same in different countries and cultures. If they see how much we depend upon it, and if they grow up loving it then they will fight to take care of it.⁸

By analyzing this educational program and through practical experience of the MAD Foundation's teaching, we were able to understand this democratization of the wild, which operates beyond the purely gastronomic sphere. The foundation has trained several dozen "VILD MAD rangers" in Denmark, so that they can provide training year-round for school groups. One of these rangers was kind enough to welcome us, so that we could discover the content of this training in "real conditions." Our investigation took us near to the sea, to a poor suburb forty minutes from Copenhagen, where we tried out this introduction to wild food. Leaving the station, we noticed that we were in a highly urban environment with lots of residential buildings, a commuter suburb very different from the splendor of the capital. It didn't feel like a good place for foraging, and the presence of a KFC and numerous fast-food restaurants all around the station showed us how far there was to go. . . However, after walking for just a few minutes, the landscape changed radically. We entered an unspoiled area, where there were few cars. We saw dunes in the distance and we noticed that lots of birds seemed to be enjoying the tranquility of this space. Now we just needed to find the building where our training would take place. We walked across a zone specializing in sailboat repair, and even though the idea of this experience filled us with enthusiasm, the surrounding vegetation did not seem conducive to foraging. This feeling was exacerbated by the fact that it was December. It was cold, fine rain made us fear the worst, and it wasn't really the ideal season, but the COVID-19 epidemic had forced us to adapt our research. According to our GPS, we were just tens of meters from the meeting place. We saw a modest modern building, its external walls covered with green metallic panels. It was nothing like the forest hut we had imagined the day before when planning our journey. We hurried along the little path, with no signs to reassure us. We were in danger of being late and there was nobody around. We heard the sound of waves, the sea was close, and as we walked around the building looking for the entrance, we came face-to-face with a fox, which ran away when it saw us. For sociologists searching for the wild, this was a reassuring sign, and we began smiling again! Through the window, we saw the ranger who had agreed to teach us. He was putting wood in a stove and he invited us in. On his chest, he wore a "VILD MAD" badge and as we began talking, we soon realized that he was intrigued by our presence. He didn't really understand why we were there and confirmed to us that it wasn't really the right season. We began to doubt the relevance of our approach. Our ranger, whose name was Olaf,⁹ invited us into the room where we would be taught, and as we were looking around, we immediately noticed the incongruity of the place. We glanced at each other knowingly, the look of sociologists who know they are on the right track. We had no doubt that the Danish laboratory of wild food was there, in front of us.

We were expecting to find a professional kitchen, with the associated layout, furniture, and hygiene standards. In fact, the space was like a living room with a convivial atmosphere, its walls decorated with a collection of stuffed birds and small rodents, as if we were in a natural history museum. In the room were small island units where participants could work in groups. On one of these, the equipment for cooking our finds was laid out. We also noticed that there were aquariums. On the right, Olaf showed us an educational resource designed to familiarize pupils with mussel farming techniques. At the back, we saw a stainless-steel sink and a dishwasher. The place was difficult to describe, and we can only say that it was profoundly hybrid. As you can imagine, Olaf was not wearing a chef's hat! He was the manager of this

⁸ Redzepi, quoted in: Jason Tesauro, "Noma Chef Rene Redzepi Wants to Help You Forage with His New Vild Mad Food App," Good Food, July 11, 2017, accessed March 16, 2022, <https://www.goodfood.com.au/recipes/news/noma-chef-rene-redzepi-wants-to-help-you-forage-with-his-new-vild-mad-food-app-20170711-gx8r1z>.

⁹ The ranger's name has been changed to ensure anonymity.

Nature Center and a trained forestry and landscape engineer, recently promoted to the rank of MAD ranger. We spent a few minutes introducing ourselves to each other, and we very quickly recognized our interlocutor's teaching skills. Aged around fifty, he was remarkably modest, and wore a broad smile at all times, particularly when we encountered translation issues (the interview was conducted in English, and all of us had our limitations in the language). Olaf portrayed his training in wild cuisine with the MAD Foundation as a major transformation! Even though he knew his area and its natural resources perfectly, he had never imagined the flavor potential and cooking possibilities they offered: "In my family, we made a few wild berry preserves, but it was a declining tradition, mainly restricted to older people. This training changed many things in my personal life. I discovered lots of edible plants and their unbelievably diverse tastes, textures, and colors. I also learned to pay attention to the presentation of dishes. Before, I ate out of bowls, and it was often the same thing: pork, potatoes, cabbage, etc. This training taught me that the presentation of dishes was very important, and that I needed to pay attention to the appearance as well as the taste." He had adopted the first rule of any good chef: we eat with our eyes first.

Our time on the beach was short: the weather was gray and windy, there had been a freeze the night before, and there were still patches of snow in places. There wasn't much to gather. We started by collecting seaweed, and Olaf encouraged us to look at it carefully to really become familiar with it: "With school groups, we focus on just three or four plants. Our aim is not to see everything, but rather for the children to leave with the ability to forage for three or four plants with their friends or family with total confidence!" He taught us to taste "like rabbits," putting the product between our teeth and top lip, to give us a chance to really get to know and absorb the specific taste of the seaweed. Then we went to some bushes that still had a few berries on them: we filled our wicker baskets with rose hips (*Rosa canina*) and hawthorn berries (*Crataegus monogyna*). The last product we collected was a small, bright yellow berry: sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*). These abundant fruits cheered up the gray, wintry atmosphere. "It's the end of the season," he told us, but these berries actually needed to be harvested at the start of winter, at the time of the first frosts. We learned that sea buckthorn berries ripen before winter, but that they are almost impossible to harvest at this stage, because they are too fragile: they burst between the fingers as soon as you try to grasp them. Frost therefore becomes the forager's unexpected ally: they can cut branches full of berries (allowing the shrub to regenerate) and harvest them easily by gently tapping the branches into a container so that the berries fall off. Suddenly, coming right in the middle of winter made sense! This original botanical story in which frost becomes the forager's assistant was like a real moment of enchantment for us. We saw these somber bushes covered in yellow berries in a new light and we could easily imagine the effect such a discovery might have on the receptive brains of young children. On our return to the "laboratory" and after carefully washing our harvest, we got ready to cook. We noticed two incongruous products on the table that our ranger had prepared ready for us to make our "meal": industrial mayonnaise and crackers for spreading. These items were far from wild, but we quickly understood that this original assemblage allowed children to make the leap, to take "the risk" of eating an unknown wild product, to enculture it, so to speak. These everyday food products allow them to "domesticate" their harvest, to integrate it into reassuring eating routines. Once again, Olaf emphasized the need for the food to be visually appealing and well presented on the plate before we tasted it. The green seaweed on the crackers stood out attractively against the yellow, red, and purple berries. We were hungry and thoroughly enjoyed the food, which was original to say the least. The juice that we made with the rest of the berries was delicious, and its flavor, color, and acidity contrasted with the preceding culinary experience.

We had now experienced this original laboratory of wild food for ourselves. The trainer was a hybrid being, half forest ranger, half chef. We had experimented in a familiar setting, very far

from an impressive professional kitchen, and the wood-burning stove at the back created a feeling of being at home. The introductory course was highly practical and pragmatic. What mattered was doing things for oneself, creating emotions and new sensations while still maintaining a strong connection with the familiar. Before we said goodbye to Olaf, he offered us the opportunity to talk to some children who had experienced the same course. We met them at their school. They were twelve years old and the teacher kindly allowed us half an hour to talk to them outside, despite the cold (this was in the middle of the COVID-19 epidemic). When we asked the children about their parents' interest in this experience, several of them said it had revived memories and family traditions. Some of them were immigrants from the Mediterranean region, and Olaf told us on the way back that the subject of foraging had allowed him to start a dialogue with these foreign mothers who had foraged as children. In this respect, the laboratory takes on a new dimension: foraging becomes a means of intercultural exchange and reciprocal enrichment. Most of the children had downloaded the VILD MAD app on their cell phones and some of them used it with their families during Sunday walks. These children above all emphasized the fact that this food was free and focused on the possibility of survival: "It's useful if you get lost in the forest." Thus, they gave us a feeling of having acquired a new skill, which is particularly reassuring since it offers a possible route to autonomy. A few days later, when we were dining in one of the restaurants in Copenhagen that boasts this wild approach (the menu is imposed), to our great surprise and satisfaction we found a bright yellow mix in our dessert that tasted like our recent discovery: sea buckthorns! The wild had found the most perfect way of following us. Indeed, this social laboratory of wild food had taken the form of an interstitial and disruptive (ruptural) "real utopia" (Wright 2013).

The wild in contemporary food: Assemblage and incarnation

The rewilding of food can be explored in terms of a promise, a nourishing utopia that allows us to enrich our everyday eating while preserving the nutritional diversity required for the survival of our species, through its practice and the reflexive act that this consumption implies. Wild food sits at the intersection of two normative injunctions that are decisive for contemporary eating: improving one's health and protecting the environment:

Diversity is our starting point and our goal. It forms a loop of feedback mediated by ecology, necessity, and appetite. There is no single food that can nourish us on its own. The pursuit of good food is in itself also the pursuit of biocultural diversity, the pursuit of a future where everyone can not only eat but eat well. Diversity—of autochthonous genetic material, of organisms, of cultural practices, of ideas—is what keeps our world at its most resilient and robust. It is the cloth that weaves our fates together and upon which we share our meals.¹⁰

By adopting the analytical perspective of the sociology of promises (Fournier and Lepiller 2019, Dalgarrondo and Hauray 2015, Pollock and Williams 2010), we want to understand new zones of exchange (Deleuze and Guattari 1980) and the social mechanisms that can initiate adhesion to the promise of the wild. The description of the "Danish laboratory" has allowed us to highlight the assembled dimension of this promise: our initiation took place in a hybrid space, an original arrangement of symbols and representations, midway between a natural history museum (stuffed animals) and a domestic kitchen (sink, island units, crackers, and a jar of mayonnaise), not forgetting the contribution of digital technology to improving people's connection with the wild. The second mechanism at work in the performativity of this promise is incarnation: in addition to the educational processes used, our trainer was the perfect

¹⁰ "Who We Are," Nordic Food Lab, accessed March 16, 2022, <https://nordicfoodlab.org/whoweare/>.

incarnation of the possibility of transforming oneself and one's everyday life through contact with wild food. He described his training with the MAD Foundation to us as a turning point in his life: a rewilding process marking a profound transformation of the self and of domestic commensality, because he was also a father who had taught his children. Let us look at these two mechanisms in more detail.

Assemblage

First of all, we can observe that these promises take a specific form: the individual is faced with an original assemblage (Ong and Collier 2008, Delanda 2016) of discourses, images, facts, fictions, imaginaries, and practices. Following the works of Deleuze and Guatarri (1980), it appears that these assemblages (which must be seen as a process, an arrangement in the making) function like a tiled roof, each element overlapping with those around it. At its heart is a cluster of fundamentals, argumentative registers that can capture attention and allow everyone, depending on their preconceptions and interests, their capacities and skills, to explore the promise's potential. A child who is reluctant to cook can cling to the familiar presence of mayonnaise on the table, another might find that the physical and sensory dimension of foraging outdoors helps them to connect with the experience. It is through this symphony of words and things that everyone can write their own score. The analysis of the promise of the wild and the question of its adoption in everyday life highlights the effects of this assembled dimension. From this perspective, the contemporary practice of "wellness fasting," as examined in conversation three between S. Dalgalarrondo, T. Fournier, and O. Bidet, provides an archetypal example. This voluntary abstinence corresponds to the possibility of a "transhumanism with bare hands": a biotechnological honing through the exploration of a "primitive" technique of the body. The hope of the biology of aging is combined here with a desire to reconnect with our "true nature," with the optimal physiology of the Paleolithic hunter-gatherer, and/or (depending on one's leaning) with our wild companions (Haraway 2003). An exploration of the self and of our capacities for resistance that is akin to a political act, a momentary liberation from the feeling of hunger with the aim of rediscovering the ways of a frugal, simple, minimalist life. This assembled form of the promise helps to spark, justify, and claim a self-rewilding process. Conversation one by O. Lepiller, O. Roudelle, S. Dury, and S. Dalla Bernardina on the contemporary consumption of game meat also demonstrates this aggregate dimension. The promise borne by this wild meat gives those who eat it a multitude of ways of justifying their atypical practices. There is of course the health argument, based on the nutritional properties of large game meat, but the authors show that this works in symbiosis with the evocation of heritage protection and preservation, of a food culture that allows them to claim a rootedness and an unflinching connection to a territory and the creatures that live in it. All of these arguments allow them to justify eating game, in a context that is a priori unfavorable to it, in which people are urged to become flexitarian, and in which vegetarianism and veganism are on the rise. The complex assemblage analyzed in conversation two between C. Pineau and L. Mariani on natural wine allows us to expand the question of circulation within the promise and of the inclusive potential of this cognitive wandering. Natural wine offers those who drink it many anchor points: science and its tools, such as microscopes, combine with more esoteric or even spiritual practices, reflected perfectly by the concept of "biodynamism." Here, once again, we have an assemblage that can appeal to various audiences and highly diverse preferences. Instrument-based rationality (for example monitoring fermentation processes) forms an original pairing with the quest for sensitivity and the possibility of a demanding and respectful dialogue with the wild dimension of vines. These multiple entry points into the promise of natural wine offer many possible routes for those concerned to explore, but above all, they make the drinker an actor in this assemblage in their own right. They cannot remain at a distance, like a spectator

watching a symphonic concert might choose to focus on the sound of a particular instrument. Those who drink natural wine, through the act of tasting it, their expectations about the wild nature of this wine, and their proximity to the unstable and fluid (de Laet and Mol 2000) product they are consuming, are called upon within the assemblage as fully fledged actors in its construction.

Incarnation

Redzepi offers an incarnation of wild food, particularly when he chooses to pose proudly on social networks holding a dead wild duck (mallard) in his hand, exhibited like a trophy. Many of Redzepi's enthusiasts were astounded by the controversy surrounding his Game and Forest Menu, which in fall 2019 included a mallard-based dish in which all the parts of the animal were used (including the brain as tempura in the head, the heart tartare in the beak, the leg presented with its feathers intact, etc.). Certain critics, offended by so much realism, even called it a "trash dish." The sous-chef at Noma, Pietro Leemann, gave a particularly interesting response, because it showed that this aesthetic of rewilding, far from being a Tarantino-like "trash" aberration, is actually assumed and claimed as a political act, a meaningful incarnation:

The reason why this dish was made is simple. When we eat meat (we use very little at Noma!), there is always a death in the middle, whether you are required to see it or not. To celebrate this death, we decided to pay respect to the animal by using everything, from head to legs just to not waste anything. However much splatter this may be in the eyes of many, I assure you that Mallard is less stained with blood than the chicken breast wrapped in the boxes of plastic that you buy at the supermarket, not to mention the low-priced and off-season vegetables that you always buy in the supermarket at home. . .¹¹

The process of "incarnation" (Hauray and Dalgalarrodo 2019) is thus to be understood as a modality of discourse, in this case, an approach to food as the foundation for an approach to life. More precisely, it is a mode of veridiction: incarnation is a mode of truth-telling that can be distinguished from other discourses presenting things as true. We hypothesize that in a situation of uncertainty, when many people are trying to identify the right way to eat, this process of incarnation can have a significant influence on people's willingness to experiment. These experimentations will then produce new knowledge and trigger new "incarnations." Incarnation can thus play a crucial role in the performativity of promise discourses. We consider the term "incarnation" to be more appropriate than "embodiment," because:

incarnation refers more exclusively to a living body (incarnation comes from the Latin word *incarnare*: in- "caro," to make into flesh or to be made flesh), whereas embodiment has been used to analyze how expectations are "inscribed" into objects or machines (Borup et al. 2006). Moreover, its religious etymology is of interest here (in Christian theology, the doctrine of Incarnation holds that through Jesus, "the Word was made flesh"). [. . .] Four characteristics of "incarnation" can be analytically distinguished to explain its capacity to impact beliefs and behaviors: (a) it mobilizes individual stories, (b) it relies on individuals' own experimentation [. . .], (c) it depicts ability to do things [. . .], (d) it often involves displaying bodies.

(Hauray and Dalgalarrodo 2019)

The body displayed can be that of the rewilded eater, or even that of the animal that will be eaten/incorporated. In this regard, the incarnation of the rewilding promise sheds light on "parrhesia." As underlined by Foucault (2011) in his analysis of the different forms of

¹¹ "Noma replies after chef says Redzepi went 'too far' with duck dish," Fine Dining Lovers, January 22, 2020, accessed March 16, 2022, <https://www.finedininglovers.com/article/noma-duck-head-dish>.

veridiction in Antiquity, the specificity of this mode of truth-telling is that the parrhesiastes speaks in their own name, about an actual and concrete situation, and that the effectiveness of their discourse relies on the fact that they stake their own life on what they are saying. The parrhesiastes is fundamentally someone who resists, who refuses to submit and uses the development of a personal ethics to question the world and find their place in it. For Foucault, submission and parrhesia are totally incompatible. Through their practice, the parrhesiastes is engaged in a power struggle. By developing a technology of the self, based here on the development of a particular diet, they try to achieve freedom from servitude, to found the ethics that allows them to become master of themselves. For the subject, the aim is to break free from norms, in order to identify a still unlikely but desirable way of being, via this reflexive work. Finally, incarnation produces knowledge of a specific epistemic value: “It allows a connection between the two dimensions of life identified by the French philosopher Canguilhem (1966): *le vivant* (the living) and *le vécu* (the lived), two grammatical forms of the verb *vivre* (to live)” (Hauray and Dalgarrondo 2019). The rewilded eater, by consuming a certain type of food, by involving their body in an uncertain or even risky practice, can make eating a political act. They become a thought-provoking model for others by providing the “living” and concrete proof of a new way of life. This brings us back to the concerns of men experiencing the midlife crisis analyzed by N. Diasio and V. Fidolini in conversation five. In response to this life event that transforms bodies and requires dietary changes, some of their survey subjects mobilize the registers of the animal and the wild to compensate for a diminished masculinity and reassert certain lost qualities: physical performance, autonomy, virility, etc. These same qualities were extolled by the manual laborers that G. Roos interviewed, who argued that they had to eat in a way that reflected their lifestyle and occupation, namely by consuming heavy food and being in nature. The analysis of urban foraging by F. Paddeu and F. Roussel in conversation four also sheds light on this process of incarnation. The practice of those who forage for reasons other than economic hardship or necessity, seems to correspond more closely to the demand for a way of life than to a pragmatic search for a new source of food supplies. These foragers fit into a nourishing utopia. They too are trying to rewild themselves in contact with nature. However, their participation in this practice seems to be primarily motivated by politico-aesthetic issues, by the desire to incarnate a different mode of existence, dictated in particular by environmental considerations. The aim is not to nourish themselves on a physiological level, but to nourish the “self” through contact with nature and with the knowledge required for this practice. The analysis of freegans as urban foragers by S. Mégarbané in her commentary seems to be consistent with this. The political dimension of this practice is omnipresent, particularly because it challenges the concept of the commons and because the bodily engagement—namely the incorporation of the products collected, which are potentially contaminated by urban activities—is like a form of manifesto. Urban foragers are an incarnation less of the possibility of “life in capitalist ruins,” in the words of Tsing (2015), than of the urgent need for an urban model that maintains the possibility of personal contact with the wild. Freegans display a highly original side of the parrhesiastes seeking rewilding: these postmodern “gatherers,” who play with the risk of food poisoning by salvaging discarded products from dumpsters, make incorporation a political act. Like those who fast, they occupy the dietary margins, in order to transform themselves (the concept of immunovolution) and at the same time they give weight to their alert. Taking health risks strengthens and supports the political act.

Food (along with its promises) represents an area of analytical opportunity that is still underexploited by those interested in our changing relationship with nature and in the forms of discreet engagement that climate issues are creating in our kitchens. The objective of this book is to explore some of the possibilities of such a connection: A nature considered here at its closest to everyday life, as a potential way of rewilding the self, at the heart of infra-politics (Scott 1990), in the privacy of domestic and routine practices. A wild nature that, here, is no

longer just an abstract concept to be deconstructed, but the concrete substance of a future digestive process.

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